1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

Map B. MPEZENI'S NGONILAND AND SURROUNDING COUNTRY 1890

102
101
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Area inhabited by Mpezeni's Ngoni.
Boundary of no-man's-land surrounding inhabited area.
Modern political boundaries (1954).

[p. 67]

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

The B.S.A. Company produced in its support treaties made by Sharpe and Stevenson with six chiefs, Mpezeni not among them. Johnston's argument for including Mpezeni's country within the area of the grant appears to have been that the land had been wrested by Mpezeni from the treaty-making chiefs. None of the six chiefs mentioned by name in the certificate made any claim in the treaties to rights in Mpezeni's country, and indeed only one of them, Muliro, a minor Nsenga-Ambo chief, bordered on Mpezeni.

However Johnston also refers in the certificate of claim to 'similar privileges obtained through treaties concluded by the African Lakes Company and transferred by them to the British South Africa Company (the said treaties have received separate confirmation at my hands)'. These additional treaties are not specified in the certificate but later Johnston wrote, in connexion with the North Charterland Concession granted by the B.S.A. Company, that 'the B.S.A. Company would base its right to grant this concession on its recognized treaties with Undi, Mwasi Kazungu and ...(I forget the names), the indigenous and partially dispossessed chiefs of Mpezeni's country'. Sharpe had made a treaty with Undi on 15 April 1891, in which the northern boundary of Undi's territory was said to be the parallel of latitude 14° S. or thereabouts, thus cutting into the southern fringe of the no-man's-land round Mpezeni. Mwase made two treaties, one on 17 September 1885 with Stevenson as agent of the African Lakes Company and another on 30 November 1889 with the British Crown. In the earlier treaty the extent of Mwase's country is not stated but when the benefits of this treaty were transferred to the B.S.A. Company in 1893, Mwase's country was said to be bounded on the west by the water-parting between the Luangwa and Zambezi-Nyasa basins and on the south by the Anglo-Portuguese border. This water-parting does not meet the Anglo-Portuguese frontier until as far west as about 31° 15' E., in what is now Petauke District, and in Ngoniland it runs approximately east-west on latitude 13° 40' S. In the area controlled by Mpezeni, Mwase's territory, as defined in the transfer agreement, included the whole portion claimed by Undi in 1891 and in addition a strip of land to the north of Undi's claim, forming the southern margin of the Ngoni settled area. The main concentration of Ngoni villages, in the valleys of the Lutembwe, Lunthwele and Maipasi rivers, lay just north of the territory claimed for Mwase. Thus the grant of rights to the B.S.A. Company in Mpezeni's country appears to have been based for the most part on treaties made with chiefs whose names Johnston forgot,

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

villages fairly astonished me; and it was not till then that I realized what a powerful and prosperous people were those whose acquaintance I was about to make.'[127]

We may compare this description of conditions in 1896 with that given by Trapnell for the same area in 1938.

'. . . Reserve II presents an example of combined cutting-out, soil-deterioration and erosion which probably has no equal in the Territory. . . . Cattle are most numerous in this reserve, and . . . their added burden on the land has doubtless helped to weigh the scales to the point of erosion. With cattle and an excessive population in Mpezeni's and Maguya's country, surface compaction and deterioration of soil have come to give place to wholesale wash, and denuded belts of resting land are now to be seen seared by dongas fully ten feet deep. The enormous gullied scars down the face of Nyamfinsi and neighbouring hills provide notable examples of the effects of millet cultivation on impossible slopes.'[128]

The devastation described by Trapnell has come about in part on account of the alienation of land to Whites, but it is also due to the transition which the Ngoni have been forced to make from living as migrant brigands to working as subsistence cultivators and migrant labourers. Even without alienation, it is likely that the large villages would have disappeared.

The population of the tribe immediately prior to the conquest was estimated by Deare to be 40,000 and possibly more. Johnston, in his highly ambitious population density map, appears to have assumed a population of about 50,000, while an official estimate in 1898 was nearly 150,000.[129] The area of Mpezeni's country was estimated by Angus to be about 400 square miles. He also delimits an area of about 2,700 square miles which he describes as 'Angoni-land proper', but it is clear that this large area includes much waterless uninhabited country. Johnston imputes, on his map, an inhabited area of 3,900 square miles, but again there is clear evidence that in fact much of this was uninhabited. In 1903 it was estimated that the area within which the Ngoni kept their cattle before the conquest was about 600 square miles.[130] Angus's lower estimate is in accord with the distances between villages given by travellers

[127] Angus, *Northern Angoniland*, p. 58.
[128] Trapnell, *Ecological Survey*, pp. 67, 71.
[129] Deare, 'Three residents', *Nyasa. A & P.*, 1894, bdl, p. 769; *B.C.A.C.*, v, 3 (16 February 1898), p. 1.
[130] Angus, *Northern Angoniland*, pp. 34, 58; *B.C.A.C.*, iii, 11 (1 June 1896), p. 1; *Reports on the Administration*, 1903, p. 19.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

CHAPTER I

THE NGONI PEOPLE

In the census of Nyasaland of 1945, there were 193,482 people enumerated as Ngoni. Their distribution extended from the extreme north in Karonga district through every other district to the extreme south in Port Herald district. There were concentrations of Ngoni people, however, as Table I shows, in the Mzimba district in the north, in the Dowa, Lilongwe, Dedza and Ncheu districts of the central province, and in the Blantyre district in the south. The Ngoni in the Mzimba district were known as Mbelwa's Ngoni [1] and will be called in this book the northern Ngoni Kingdom.

Table I

Distribution of Ngoni in Nyasaland by Provinces and Districts from 1945 Census

Northern Province	Total 45,539
Mzimba district	44,948
Karonga "	295
Chinteche "	296
Central Province*	Total 80,943
Kasungu district	2,539
Dowa "	20,329
Lilongwe "	17,707
Dedza "	14,757
Ncheu "	15,242
Kotakota "	4,838
Fort Manning "	5,531
Southern Province	Total 67,000
Blantyre district	25,224
Zomba "	6,072
Liwonde "	7,572
Nemo "	10,211
Cholo "	9,185
Fort Johnston "	1,343
Chikwawa "	1,029
Chiradzulu "	4,655
Mlanje "	751
Port Herald "	58
Total	193,482

* In 1931 this was included in the Northern Province.

[1] Tew, M. *Peoples of the Lake Nyasa Region*. O.U.P., 1950, p. 91.

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2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

the northern Ngoni kingdom. Other groups of these Ngoni were found in three separate states in the Dowa and Kotakota districts. The Ngoni in the Ncheu district were known as Gomani's Ngoni and will be called in this book the central Ngoni kingdom. Four states which separated from this kingdom were found in the Dedza, Lilongwe and Cholo districts. The Ngoni in Fort Manning district belonged to Mpeseni's kingdom in the Fort Jameson district of Northern Rhodesia.

According to these census figures, the northern Ngoni kingdom with the three separated states accounted for 69,706; the central kingdom with the four separated states accounted for 46,891. Leaving out the Fort Manning Ngoni, there were 71,354 Ngoni in the rest of Nyasaland who had at one time formed part of the northern and central kingdoms and their offshoots, but who had dispersed in search of work and had made large settlements in the towns and on the estates of the southern province where employment was to be found. A similar dispersion from the main Ngoni concentrations in Nyasaland to Southern and Northern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa had taken place which formed part of the extensive emigration from Nyasaland in search of better employment than that available in the territory.

The existence of two Ngoni kingdoms, several smaller Ngoni states, and a still larger number of people enumerated as Ngoni but dispersed in every district of Nyasaland, poses a number of problems for the anthropologist. In this book I have concentrated on the two Ngoni kingdoms and on the Ngoni culture found in them in the 1930's. It was my intention, by focusing on the two kingdoms, to show that there was an Ngoni culture which had common elements in both areas and hence was shared to some extent by all the Ngoni living in Nyasaland. We shall be asking the questions in Part I—Who can be called Ngoni? What is Ngoni culture? Why do people in every district of Nyasaland enumerate themselves as Ngoni though a large number no longer live in the Ngoni kingdoms or in the Ngoni states? Are we discussing a people whose cultural affiliation survives political dispersal? The chief problem in the relation between the Ngoni kingdoms as political states and Ngoni culture will be stated in Part I and illustrated and analysed in the rest of the book. In this chapter, we shall examine the ethnic composition of the inhabitants of the two Ngoni kingdoms.

ETHNIC ELEMENTS IN THE NGONI KINGDOMS

There were four main groups of people in the Ngoni kingdoms, distinguished by the areas from which their ancestors came and designated by the Ngoni as 'those from the south', 'those from south of the Zambesi', 'those from the march' and 'those from this country'. The Ngoni said that the clan descent name of a person showed to which group he or she belonged.

885 692 diagram is that of the *madoda*, the older men who wore the head-ring. Probably in pre-European days they received more recognition than was apparent in the 1930's after the head-ring had been given up. The *madoda* will be referred to in the next chapter on the royal village and in Chapter V of Part III on age sets. In the appeal court of the Paramount and in the chief's court there was always a group of these senior men sitting behind the *isinduna*, to whom the *induna* speaking to the case sometimes turned for advice and consultation.

645 Reference was made to an overlap between territorial office-bearers and national office-bearers. The big *isinduna*, the spokesman of the Paramount, and sometimes the messengers, were members of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, and often were *alumuzana* who had no courts. This was a method by which in the 1930's those *alumuzana* could be drawn into the circle of officials and receive a small salary for their services.

This set of office-bearers which we have considered in relation to the Paramount, with the exception of his spokesman and his praiser, was duplicated for the chiefs in both kingdoms, whether they were of the royal clan or *alumuzana*. The account of the royal village in the central kingdom which follows in the next chapter will illustrate how these officials functioned in the day-to-day affairs of the Paramount's headquarters.

CHAPTER V

A ROYAL VILLAGE AFTER 1933

The Paramount and his village

[19] [114] [13] 161 ● The writer lived in 1933 and in 1936 lived in the Paramount's village of Magangu in the central kingdom. The central kingdom included all Ncheu district, consisting of 1,092 square miles, a total population of 88,446, and a density of 80·99 per square mile. The village was 300 yards off the main road running from north to south of Nyasaland, and was approached by a hoed motor road flanked by huts. It consisted of three main sections: the Paramount's large brick residence and the surrounding buildings within a palisade or reed fence, including the huts of his daughter and son-in-law, and of his brother-in-law and sister; the huts and kraal in the section of the *induna* of his big house, Kalikombe Mbewe; and the huts and kraal of the original village 'owned' by the headman, Lazaro Dzonzi. On the south of the village was the large open space where the weekly market was held, and where several Indian stores faced the main road. On the north was the dispensary building,

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956

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2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956

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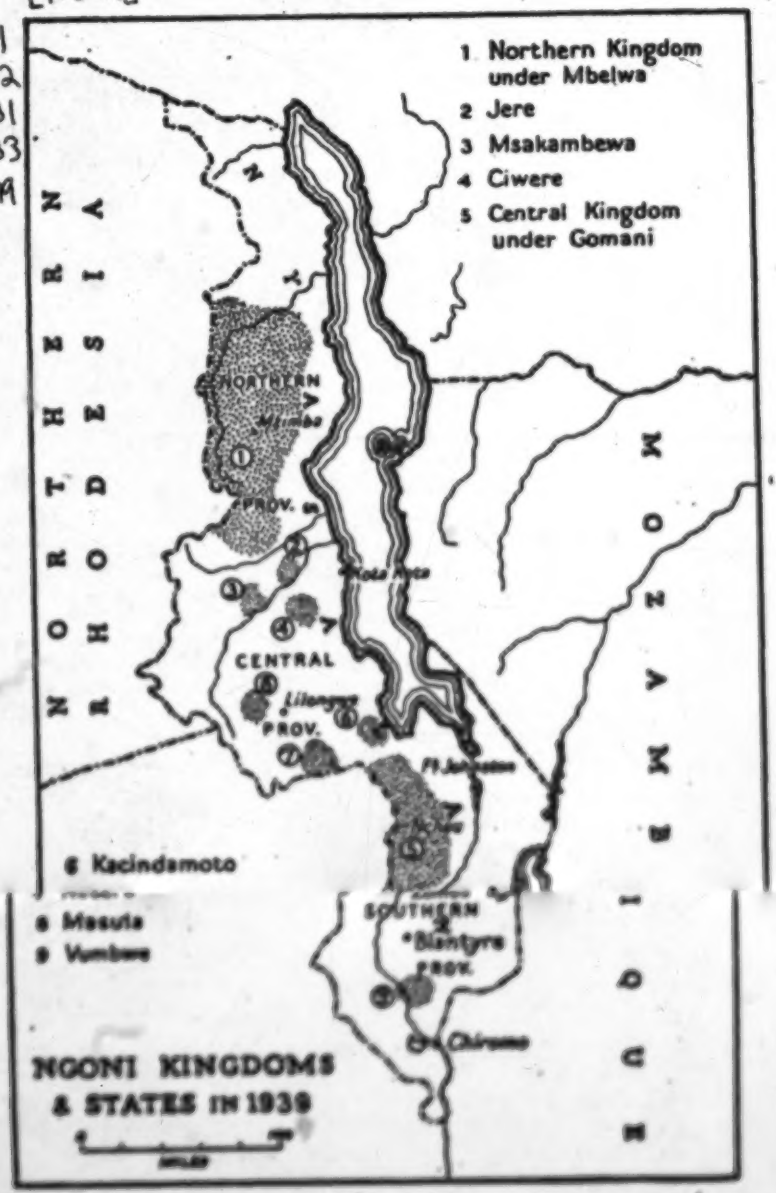

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

I

Ngonland and the People who lived in it

The homeland

The little country of Nyasaland in Central Africa received its name from the lake by which Livingstone and those who followed him penetrated into the interior and reached the lands and people living round the lake. On the west side there is a narrow strip of low-lying coastal land. Then a series of escarpments begin, and up them roads and paths wind through steep wooded valleys, until the final scarp leads to the grasslands of the high plateau. Here on the high plateau the Ngoni settled about the middle of the nineteenth century, after nearly forty years of trekking from Natal to Tanganyika. They turned south again at the shores of Lake Victoria and returned to this land which they had passed through on their northward march. This high plateau has great diversity of scenery, and much of it reminded the Ngoni of the hills and valleys and grasslands of Natal. There are high mountains with sharp peaks and massive granite shoulders. Between the ranges of lower grass-covered hills are shallow valleys where the rain washes down good soil to the valley bottoms. Sweeps of grassland, bare of trees, alternate with river valleys where there is a continuous flow of water, fed by springs and mountain streams.

In the dry season, from April to November, the trees lose their leaves and the grass gradually dries up till the prevailing colours are gold and brown against the black and grey

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

There were musicians and craftsmen there, as at Enkodlweni. All the senior Ngoni men knew Ngoni history, used proverbs in the courts and in conversation, and two or three senior men knew and carried out the ritual of the ancestor cult. The new element in this village was due to economic influences rather than missionary and educational. Most of the men had learned to read and write Nyanja while away at work, but no one knew more than a few words of English, and only one or two of the leading men, and no women, spoke Ngoni.

The men of the leading Ngoni families formed a closely knit group for purposes of village affairs, social life and ritual performances. There was a group of senior Ngoni women who exerted a powerful influence in all matters concerned with household life and the bringing up of children. But out of a total of one hundred and twenty-one households, only thirty-seven belonged to men of Ngoni clans, and there were only thirty-two women of Ngoni clans including both the older and the younger groups of women. The aristocratic group here was small in comparison with Enkodlweni, but the influence of their ways of living was proportionately much stronger. The Ngoni men and women of leading families were very conscious of their cultural distinction and also of their relatively small numbers, and many were the complaints about 'those other people who are spoiling our land'.

Political and social changes

When the British took over the administration of Nyasaland between 1891 and 1901, the Ngoni kingdoms received no special recognition. Their chiefs, called by the administration principal village headmen, and their heads of clans called village headmen, were relegated to the same position *vis-à-vis* the administration as the local peoples. Part of the Central Ngoni kingdom was cut off from the rest by the treaty demarcating the Nyasaland boundary from Portuguese East Africa.

that despite the vicissitudes of history there is some unbroken but continually changing system of social relationships which we may call Ngoni social structure, and that there is therefore some point in comparing Ngoni marriage in the 1890's with Ngoni marriage to-day; and on the other hand may prepare the way for a broader analysis of Ngoni kinship, of which marriage is one part.

The Fort Jameson Ngoni, with whom alone we are concerned in this paper, differ considerably from the other Ngoni groups in Africa and there is evidence that there are differences in marriage arrangements even from the nearby groups in Northern and Southern Nyasaland. The Fort Jameson Ngoni, numbering about 85,000, live in the Fort Jameson District of Northern Rhodesia and in the Fort Manning division of Lilongwe District of Nyasaland. Their country stretches from 13°25'S to 14°S latitude and from 32°10'E to 35°15'E longitude. Like other Ngoni groups they have a history of migration from Natal at the time of the rise of the Zulu under Shaka in the 1820's. They arrived at their present abode in about 1870 and were conquered by British troops in 1898. The leader of the group was Mpezeni I, and the present Paramount Chief, Mpezeni III, is his son's son's son. There are ten county chieftainships in Northern Rhodesia and two in Nyasaland, and each chief has his own court. The people live by subsistence cultivation, with maize as the main crop. A little maize and some cattle are sold to the local European-owned tobacco farms and in the township of Fort Jameson, but the principal source of money income is work on the farms or at the urban centres of Southern Rhodesia and the railway line of Northern Rhodesia. Many women and almost all men have been to Southern Rhodesia at some time or other[1].

[1] For an outline account of the social structure of this group, see Barnes, 'The Fort Jameson Ngoni', pp. 194 - 221 in Elizabeth Colson and Max Gluckman, eds., *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa*, London, Oxford University Press, 1951.

5:Allan C-5 (1941) 1949 FR5 Ngoni FR5 ●
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Lamba FQ8
Maravi FR4

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SKETCH MAP OF PART OF NORTHERN RHODESIA TO SHOW THE AREAS OF THE WESTERN PROVINCE, MKUSHI DISTRICT AND EASTERN PROVINCE, REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT.

5: Allan C-5 (1941) 1949 FR5 Ngoni FR5 Mpezeni
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PART IV

THE RESETTLEMENT OF NATIVE POPULATIONS IN NORTHERN RHODESIA

§ 1. *The Problem and its Origin*

IN Northern Rhodesia and doubtless over amuch greater part of Africa before the coming of the Europeans, the ppulation-land pattern was a changing, kaleidoscopic picture. If an area beame overcrowded more land was available, or it could be taken from a nghbouring people. A rough balance between land and population was maintined by means of migration, inter-tribal wars, periodic famine and disease.

With the coming of the European the kaleidscopic picture was arrested, producing what we may call the primary ppulation-land pattern. This was later modified, by alienation and reservatin of land and by the movement of peoples into Native reserves, to poduce a secondary pattern. New economic factors have so far modified thi secondary pattern only to a minor extent, but it may be expected that they vill tend to do so increasingly in the future.

The secondary population-land pattern was rought about mainly by the movement of the African population into Nativ reserves. As a result of this movement large areas of Crown Land were eft practically uninhabited, and a number of factors operating together rought about mal-distribution and congestion of populations within the rserves themselves.

So far the problem has been studied in detil only in the Fort Jameson and Petauke Districts of the Eastern Province the Mkushi District of the Central Province and the Ndola District of te Western Province, and it is within these districts that resettlement work—other than the 'Chitemene Control' scheme—has been carried out. The four districts are contiguous and the total area within them to which this discussion refers is about 33,800 square miles (4,000 square miles more than the whole land area of Scotland but only about one-ninth of the area of Northern Rhodesia) with a total population, in round figures, of 290,000 (about one-sixth of the total population of the Territory).

The primary population-land pattern was such that the ten tribes living within this area had ample or much more than ample land, except to a minor extent in the Fort Jameson District where the incursion of the immigrant Ngoni in the later 19th century had created a potential congestion problem. Under former conditions this problem would doubtless have resolved itself as it arose by migration of the Chewa to north and west, under pressure from the Ngoni, but once the kaleidoscopic pattern was arrested no such

5:Allan C-5 (1941)1949 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni
Lamba FQ8
Maravi FR4

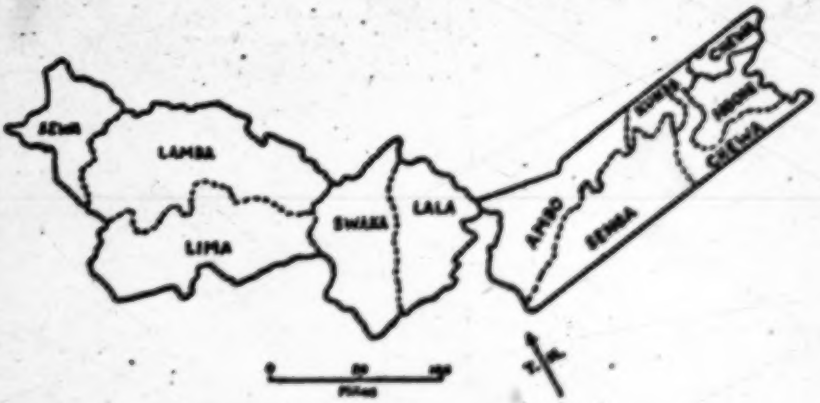

Fig 1.— THE ORIGINAL POPULATION-LAND PATTERN
Showing areas held by tribes.

movement was possible. The lands of the Ngoni and Chewa were then reduced, by alienation to European settlers and by reservation, to an extent which the following figures illustrate:

Habitable Land held by Tribes (square miles)

	Chewa	Ngoni*
Before Ngoni invasion	3,580	–
After Ngoni invasion	2,280	1,300
After land alienation	1,124	878
After creation of reserves	889	673

Throughout the Petauke and Mkushi Districts the amount of land taken up by European settlers was negligible, but the Senga, Ambo, Lala and Swaka peoples were moved into Reserves some of which proved totally inadequate for the land needs of their traditional agricultural systems.

In the west (Ndola District) the congestion problem arose largely as a result of displacement of people from the area which is now the Copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia, a land loss which fell on the Lamba tribe. The land area of Mushiri's section of the Lamba, for example, which formerly included part of the Copperbelt, was reduced from 2,200 to 360 square miles. The Lamba were removed from the new mining areas and this movement accentuated by some migration of more distant peoples attracted by the mines, gave rise to a belt of relatively high population concentration about the southern and eastern margins of the Copperbelt.

* With a mixture of Chewa and other tribes.

5:Allan C-5 (1941) 1949 FR5 Ngoni FR5 Mpezeni Lamba FQ8 Marawi FR4

In demarcating the Reserves three assumptions were made; that populations would prove sufficiently fluid to adapt themselves to the altered circumstances and to attain an equitable distribution in relation to the available land, that artificial water supplies would be provided on a scale sufficient to allow of such a distribution and that improvement in methods of agriculture would be sufficiently rapid to compensate for land loss and to provide for increasing populations. However reasonable these assumptions may have been at the time, none has been verified by events. The boundaries of tribes and chieftaincies remained static, there was little or no migration from over-populated to under-populated areas and in one instance congestion was aggravated by immigration from outside the Territory. The systems of land usage tended to degenerate rather than to improve, partly owing to increasing pressure on the land and partly because of migration of the men to the centres of employment. It was assumed too that adequate agricultural and water development services would be provided, and it proved beyond the resources of the country to provide such services in time to meet the need.

As a result of these factors, some of which could not have been foreseen owing to the lack of adequate data at the time, and some of which, like the economic depression and its effect on territorial finances, were unpredictable, extreme maldistribution arose in some parts of the Reserves. By 1941 more than half of the people within the Native Reserves of the four districts were living under conditions of more or less acute land shortage in relation to the land needs of their traditional systems, and very considerable areas were in process of rapid degeneration.

There is now little point in discussing whether or not the application of measures for agricultural improvement could have solved the problems of over-concentration without transfer of populations. In all probability no measure which would have been practicable could have met the case. The agriculture of a people can be rapidly developed only if three factors are present together; the means, the incentive and the will. Throughout the area we are discussing these factors were and for that matter still are, to a large extent absent. Except for local concentrations of cattle among the Ngoni, Chewa and eastern Senga, stock are lacking or negligible in numbers. The only implements are the hoe and the axe. A high proportion of the able bodied men are away at work, and the main source of income is from local employment by Europeans or the fraction of the wages of migrant labour which returns to the villages. With one or two local exceptions there are no cash crops sufficiently remunerative to compete with the attraction of the labour centres or to act as an incentive and provide the means for agricultural improvement. Nor was there any will to adopt new, incomprehensible and laborious methods while great areas of land, formerly in the possession of the people, remained empty and unused. This psychological factor alone would have defeated, and where it was attempted did defeat, all efforts at agricultural improvement. In addition, throughout most of the cattle areas of the Eastern Province population concentrations had reached such a level that even the immediate general adoption of an advanced system

T: Hodgson G-5 (1926) 1913 FRS Ngoni FRS
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NOTES ON THE ACHEWA AND ANGONI OF THE DOWA DISTRICT OF THE NYASALAND PROTECTORATE.

[With Maps 1 and 2.]

By A. G. O. Hodgson.

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I.—Introductory.

1. Geographical Introduction.

The Nyasaland Protectorate consists of a strip of land some five hundred miles in length and approximately seventy miles in width, lying around the southern and western shores of Lake Nyasa, which is the most southerly and the third in size of the great East African lakes. The flat, low-lying plain which forms part of the Rift valley rises gradually from an altitude of 1,200 feet on the Lower Shire River to 1,900 feet at the head of the lake. To the west of this

[Text continues on page 196]

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7: Hodgson G-5 (1926) 1933 FRS Ngoni FRS Maravi FR4

plain is a moderately temperate, undulating plateau, standing from 3,000 to 3,500 feet above sea-level and broken by ranges of mountains whose peaks tower several thousand feet higher.

The Dowa District is situated in the centre of the Protectorate. Its area of 3,400 square miles is divided topographically into three nearly equal parts, the alluvial lake-shore plain on the east giving way to the escarpment of the hilly plateau in the centre, which again drops steeply on the west to another plain extending to the banks of the Bua River. Each plain is well covered with light timber and long grass, and contains a plentiful supply of all local varieties of game. Tsetse have long infested the lake shore; on the west, migrating from Rhodesia, they crossed the Bua as recently as 1914 and have now spread as far as the hills. The central plateau is cool and healthy. Formerly well timbered, it has since been denuded by the wasteful methods of the native inhabitants. It is free from tsetse and mosquitoes, and cattle thrive in consequence. The larger species of game are absent.

2. *Sociological Introduction.*

The census of 1926, taken at the time when these notes were compiled, shows the population of the District as consisting of 57,104 Achewa,[1] 38,244 Angoni, 93 Anyanja and 4,857 Wayao, together with an odd thousand belonging to other tribes. The Achewa live principally in the west and centre, the Angoni on the central plateau, and the Anyanja and Wayao on the lake shore. The same census gives a total of 247,000 Angoni and 470,000 Anyanja and Achewa out of 1,200,000 natives then settled in the Protectorate.

The two last-named tribes taken together are commonly the largest in Nyasaland, and they have probably lived in their present habitat longer than any others; but the exact duration of their residence can only be a matter for conjecture, since the history of the southern Bantu peoples, during the last four centuries at any rate, consists of one long series of migrations and invasions. From time to time clans and tribes have been united under a strong and powerful leader, and a few decades later disintegration has set in and they have almost vanished. New names have frequently been adopted, and few tribes in south-east Africa now bear the same designation and occupy the same ground as did their ancestors four hundred years ago. Oral tradition is supplemented but scantily by the reports of the early Portuguese explorers, who first ascended the Zambesi River at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Their objects were commercial rather than scientific, and they have left little record of the native peoples with whom they came in contact.

It is known, however, that the Achewa and Anyanja are offshoots or descendants of the A-maravi, who inhabited the country north of the Zambesi at Sena and Tete in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In his Report upon the Rivers of Cuama (Zambesi) compiled in 1667 Father Manuel Barreto states that this warlike tribe was governed by its emperor, named Cazenga, whose kingdom extended two hundred leagues up the river from the port of

[1] Tribal names in Nyasaland generally take the plural prefix A-, as A-ngoni, A-chewa, sometimes Wa-, as Wa-yao. The singular prefix is M-, as Mngoni, Myao. Further south, Ama-, Aba- and Ama- are more common, e.g. Aba-Ngoni, Aba-Mbo, Ama-Matebele. For the sake of convenience, where there is no danger of confusion between prefix and stem, I have omitted the hyphen.

TRADITION AND PRESTIGE AMONG THE NGONI

MARGARET READ

1. THE NGONI PEOPLE. Before I made my first camp in an Ngoni village, many Europeans had said to me, 'There are practically no Ngoni left to-day. They are all hopelessly mixed with other tribes. None of them keep to the Ngoni customs any longer. Their chiefs are no good.' From the doorway of my hut I saw people coming all day long to the Paramount Chief, behaving towards him with profound respect, bringing him presents, working for him. His children formed a special group in the village, easily recognizable by their bearing and their manners. Old *indunas*[1] came to instruct me, as they had instructed chiefs in their day, on the duties of a ruler, and the code of Ngoni laws. Old warriors in war dress came and danced by the cattle kraal and sang praise songs. Courts were held with scrupulous regard for order and justice. Other chiefs came visiting from distant parts with their retainers, and were received ceremonially. It soon became apparent that here was the centre of a political state, whose head was invested with prestige and authority over a wide area, and where behaviour to the Paramount and to every one else was strictly regulated by custom, and so strictly observed. These were Ngoni, and they and their fellow Ngoni in other areas[1] for the next ten months introduced me to the Ngoni people. The European assertion, that they no longer existed as a people, they laughed at, and proceeded to demonstrate that the contrary was true.

The Ngoni are found to-day scattered over four East African territories. The largest groups are in Nyasaland in the districts of Mzimba, Dowa, Fort Manning, Dedza, and Ncheu. In Northern Rhodesia they are in the Fort Jameson and Lundazi districts bordering on Nyasaland. Another section is in Portuguese East Africa on the South-West border of Nyasaland. Under other names there are Ngoni settlements in Tanganyika Territory. The present divisions of the Ngoni are due partly to European frontiers, partly to the fact that more than

[1] According to the census returns there are about 80,000 Ngoni in Northern Rhodesia and nearly 150,000 in Nyasaland, with other groups in Tanganyika Territory and Portuguese East Africa.

[1] [i.e., military leaders.—Analyst]

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FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

THE FORT JAMESON NGONI

By J. A. BARNES

Historical and Zoological Background

101 There are about a dozen groups of people in different parts of Africa who call themselves Ngoni, and others are using that name have also been classified as Ngoni on the basis of common origin. They are found in Tanganyika Territory, Portuguese East Africa, Nyasaland, and Northern Rhodesia. The name Ngoni is derived from Nguni, the designation applied to themselves by the Zulu and Xhosa peoples. The Ngoni have a common history of emigration from the vicinity of Zululand, in Natal, in the 1820's, and of subsequent migration northwards. This common heritage they share with the Ndebele of Southern Rhodesia. These migrations were occasioned by the rise to power of the Zulu chief Shaka, whose defeat of his chief rival, Zwide of the Ndwandwe, led to the flight northwards of parties of Ndwandwe refugees. At least two parties travelled as far north as the River Zambezi, one of them led by Zwangendaba, whose party crossed the river in 1835.[1] This Ngoni group reached the vicinity of Lake Tanganyika in about 1845, and there Zwangendaba died. His people split into several segments, led by his sons and other followers. One of these segments went on further north, others turned towards Lake Nyasa, while one segment led by Mpezeni, a son of Zwangendaba, struck south-westwards towards the Bemba country in what is now the Northern Province of Northern Rhodesia. Here, in about 1856, they fought unsuccessfully with the Bemba, retreated southwards, and in about 1863 crossed the River Luangwa into Fort Jameson District. In 1868 they moved westwards into Petauke District, and a few years later moved eastwards to their present habitat in the vicinity of Fort Jameson.[2] It is with this group of Ngoni that we are concerned.[3]

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[1] Perrin, *Story of the Crossing of the Zambezi*, pp. 190-2.

[2] Cf. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, pp. 439-40; Colenso, *Ity Ngoni of Nyasaland*, pp. 1-38; Davis, *Ten Years in Savage Africa*, p. 121; Gondo, *Among the Wild Angoni*, p. 18; Fraser, *Winning a Primitive People*, pp. 310-13; Hodgson, *Notes on the Ankoni and Angoni*, p. 103; Kayambula, *Angoni*; Lwendo and Mpezeni, pp. 1-113; Lancaster, *Forestry Chronology*, p. 86; Poole, *Native Orders*, pp. 3-10; Read, *Tradition and Prestige*, p. 280; Stigand, *Province of Nyasaland*, p. 128; Watson, *Province of British Central Africa*, p. 180; Wilson, *Cambridge ... Ant Angoni*, pp. 180-6; Wisemberger, *Angoni Paramountcy*, pp. 108-13; Young, *History of the Nyasaland Kamanga*, pp. 108-13.

[3] I worked among these people for a year in 1938-9 as an Assistant Anthropologist of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute.

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The present-day population of the tribe is about 83,000, of whom about 60,000 live in Northern Rhodesia and 23,000 in the Port Manning area of Nyasaland.[1] In Northern Rhodesia the tribe is largely confined to two demarcated Native Reserves. In 1938 the density of population in these two reserves averaged 68 persons to the square mile,[2] but in some congested or very fertile areas it was 90 or more.[3] Since 1941 the density has been reduced in some of the more congested parts by controlled resettlement in areas outside the reserves.[4] The density of population of the Nyasaland section of the tribe was about 98 persons to the square mile in 1945.[5]

The region in which the Ngoni live consists of a fairly flat plateau about 3,500 feet above sea-level, with massive granite outcrops rising another 1,000 feet or more. The soils of the region are principally of the types suitable only for shifting or partial cultivation, but there are also belts of more valuable soils.[6] In relation to the customary mode of agriculture, in which maize is the principal crop, the critical density of the land has been calculated to be about 20 persons to the square mile.[7] The annual rainfall at Port Jameson varies from 27 to 48 inches, averaging about 33 inches. The region contains the meeting of the Lunsemfwa-Mpika and Lunsemfwa-Zambezi watersheds. Most of the streams that flow down into the Lunsemfwa dry up in July, while the Zambezi and Mpika streams continue to flow somewhat longer.[8]

The natural vegetation of the region consists principally of *Brachystegia-Isoberlinia* woodlands, with larger trees along the lines of streams. The mean maximum temperature for the region is about

of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. This account was prepared at Oxford, and I am very grateful to Dr. Max Gluckman for criticism of this paper in draft.

[1] In the 1931 Nyasaland census many of the people living in the two Ngoni reserves were classified as Cewa. Hence the figure of 3,231 Ngoni in Port Manning does not represent the total population of these two reserves. Cf. *Report on the Census*, Table 9.

[2] Calculated from the figure given in the *Fact Report*, p. 364. These two reserves contain Cewa chieftainships as well as Ngoni, but the average population density of the two tribes is probably of the same order.

[3] Trapnell, *Ecological Survey*, p. 70.

[4] Fraser, *Land Resettlement*, pp. 47-9.

[5] *Report on the Census*, Table 8. The Port Manning District contains a Cewa chieftainship as well as the two Ngoni. The figure given above is the average for the whole district.

[6] Trapnell, *Ecological Survey*, p. 70.

[7] Allan, *African Land Usage*, p. 19.

[8] Fosbrooke, *Human Geography*, pp. 1 and 2.

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a point some fifteen miles south of Fort Jameson. It seems likely that earlier eastward move was being contemplated when in 1898 they clashed with troops from Nyasaland, and were defeated. Already the territory under the control of Mpezeni stretched across the Luangwa-Shire watershed, and with the establishment of British rule in the same year, that portion of Mpezeni's domain lying across the watershed became detached from the main portion which lay in Northern Rhodesia. The Nyasaland section of the empire is now controlled by two independent Ngoni chiefdomships, both in the Fort Manning area of Lilongwe District. In this Territory, the present Paramount Chief is a great-grandson of the first Mpezeni.

/4/ Like all the Ngoni groups, Mpezeni's people are the result of much intermarriage between the southern migrants and the Central Bantu people with whom they fought. In particular, Mpezeni's Ngoni intermarried a great deal with the Nsenga of Petauke District, and it is the Nsenga language that is spoken to-day in Ngoni villages, rather than the old Ngoni language, akin to Zulu, which is used only in praises and songs. Chewa is spoken in some villages which at the time of the arrival of the Europeans had been incorporated only a short time into the Ngoni state and had not had time to lose their own Chewa tongue.

The principal difference between the Ngoni and their surrounding neighbours is in their form of centralized chiefdomship, inherited from father to son. Under the Paramount Chief are nine minor chiefs, positions created by the British South Africa Company's administration, and held by descendants in the male line of Zwangendaba and his important officials. Until about 1930 there were divisional headmen in charge of a number of villages, but these posts have now disappeared. In a village there is a headman, an hereditary position in the male line, and often one or two assistants, also hereditary offices, descended from captains of the original headmen who had been promoted to responsible office.

In the old days one of the principal ways in which the diverse elements within the Ngoni state were unified was through the regimental system. Regiments were formed every so many years as a

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national basis to include all the adolescent males in the tribe, whatever their origin. Women were grouped into corresponding regiments. This system broke down after the first World War, when so many young men went away in the fighting. To-day the great exodus is not to war but to work, to the mines of Southern Rhodesia and elsewhere, and the incidence of labour migration is so high that it is not unknown to find a village in which there is no adult male resident. Part of the exodus is seasonal, and many men and women, as well as children, find employment on the tobacco farms of the district and in Fort Jameson Township.

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The staple crop is maize, of which enough is grown to provide in good years for a small surplus for sale to the tobacco farms and the Administration. Tobacco is not grown by Africans for sale, except within the villages, but vegetables and a little rice and finger millet are sold to Europeans. Cattle are kept in the fly-free areas, and play an important but diminishing part in social life as the means of paying bridewealth, but the sale of cattle is not at present a regular affair. Their principal use is as a form of capital investment that can be called up to meet damages and fines awarded by the Courts.

The population of the tribe is about 60,000, the majority living in the Ngoni and Mwanbia Reserves, both near to Fort /5/ Jameson. The remainder live on the tobacco farms or in Fort Jameson Township. Villages vary in size from settlements of three or four huts to large clusters containing up to 300 people. The average size of a village is about thirty huts with a population of 200.

The Ngoni conquerors reckoned descent in the male line, while most of the people whom they conquered and with whom they married traced descent through the mother. To-day for practical purposes, descent is ambilateral, in that any connection through a male or female ancestor can be made use of as the occasion demands.